

News Release



Santa Rosa County
Board of County Commissioners
Public Information Office
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High Water Mark Initiative Kick-off

Officials from Santa Rosa County and FEMA will kick-off the newest flood education program, the Santa Rosa High Water Mark Initiative, Tuesday, Dec. 9 at 11 a.m. at Navarre Park, 8513 Hwy. 98 near the foot of the Navarre Beach Bridge. The goal of the program is to draw attention to Santa Rosa County's flood risk by marking how high the water has risen in previous flooding events and to encourage residents to take steps to reduce their risk. The public is invited to come and visit the informational booths set up by our local, state, and federal partners.

The heart of the program is the installation of 13 signs located around the county that mark the point of the highest water level during Hurricane Ivan in 2004. The signs are designed by Gulf Breeze High School Academy of Multimedia Design and Technology and will be placed at the following parks:

- Shoreline Park Boat Launch
- Navarre Visitors Center
- Riverwalk on Blackwater River
- North side of Avalon Bridge
- Oriole Beach Boat Ramp
- Navarre Beach Park
- Bay Bridge Boat Launch (west side of Gulf Breeze Parkway)
- Carpenter's Park Boat Launch
- Andrew Jackson Drive Boat Launch
- Russell Harbor Landing Park
- Deaton Bridge
- Woodlawn Beach Boat Ramp
- South Side of Avalon Bridge

"My hope with the High Water Marks is that our citizens will spend a minute considering how a major flood could impact them, then that they take at least one new step to protect themselves and their homes," says Chairman and District 3 Commissioner Don Salter, "Whether it's making a plan, making a kit, or putting valuable information in waterproof containers, there are low-cost and no-cost ways to protect ourselves, our loved ones and our property from floods."

As recently as April, Santa Rosa County fell victim to unprecedented flooding caused by historic rainfall that resulted in damage to more than 480 homes and businesses causing \$8.1 million in private property damage. Much of the damage was located in moderate- to low-risk areas where National Flood Insurance Program flood insurance policies start as low as \$129 per year. This new high water mark initiative will remind people of the community's flood history and the importance of being insured.

High Water Mark Initiative was created by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and partner Federal agencies as a community-based awareness initiative to remind residents of major local floods and encourage residents to prepare for the next one. Participating communities post high water mark signs in prominent places, hold a high profile launch event to unveil the signs, and conduct ongoing education to build local awareness of flood risk and motivate people to take action.

Santa Rosa County has customized their HWM project to raise flood risk awareness and to highlight the importance of flood insurance and other actions communities can take to increase flood resilience. Visit www.SantaRosa.fl.gov or call (850)981-7029 to learn more about this initiative and use the “Cost of Flooding” tool at www.FloodSmart.gov to see how much damage flooding can do to your home, inch by inch.

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